

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A nasolacrimal stent for lacrimal passage plastic surgery comprising a flexible detention tube having a diameter that permits the flexible detention tube to be inserted and detained in a lacrimal passage, and provided with at least one opening formed in a part thereof at a predetermined distance from one of opposite ends thereof;

wherein distal end parts of the flexible tube are tapered and have rounded tips, respectively, and

wherein the flexible tube includes a flexible detention tube segment, and flexible probe segments connected to opposite ends of the detention tube segment, respectively, so as to be continuous with the detention tube segment.

Claim 2 (original) The nasolacrimal stent for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 1, wherein the opening of the flexible tube is formed in an outer corner of a bend formed by bending a part of the flexible tube at an angle to the other part of the same.

Claim 3 (cancelled)

Claim 4 (currently amended) The nasolacrimal stent for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 3 1, wherein the probe tube segments are formed of a transparent material.

Claim 5 (currently amended) The nasolacrimal stent for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 3 1, wherein the distal end parts of the probe tube segments are bent elastically in the shape of a hook.

Claim 6 (currently amended) The nasolacrimal stent for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 3 1, wherein the probe tube segments are formed of a polyolefin resin, a polyamide resin, a polyurethane resin or a mixture of some of those resins.

Claim 7 (currently amended) A nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery comprising:

a flexible tube capable of being inserted and detained in a lacrimal passage and provided with at least an opening formed in a part thereof at a predetermined distance from one of opposite ends thereof; and

an illuminating device capable of being inserted in and extracted from the flexible tube through the opening formed in the flexible tube,

wherein the flexible tube includes a flexible detention tube segment and flexible, transparent probe tube segments connected to opposite ends of the flexible detention tube segment so as to be continuous with the flexible detention tube segment.

Claim 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 7, wherein the opening of the flexible tube is formed in an outer corner of a bend formed by bending a part of the flexible tube at an angle to the other part of the same.

Claim 10 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 7, wherein the illuminating device is an optical fiber, and a light source is connected to the optical fiber.

Claim 11 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 7, wherein the illuminating device is a self-luminous device.

Claim 12 (currently amended) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 7, wherein the flexible tube comprises distal end parts, and the distal end parts of the flexible tube are bent elastically in the shape of a hook.

Claim 13 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 7 further comprising a bougie formed from a wire and capable of being inserted in and extracted from the flexible tube through the opening.

Claim 14 (currently amended) A nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery comprising:

a flexible tube having a diameter that permits the flexible tube to be inserted and detained in a lacrimal passage, and provided with at least one opening formed in a part thereof at a predetermined distance from one of opposite ends thereof; and

a tube position finding means for ascertaining the position of the flexible tube in a lacrimal passage or nasal cavity, said tube position finding means being capable of being inserted in and of being extracted from the flexible tube through the opening formed in the flexible tube.

Claim 15 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14, wherein the flexible tube includes a flexible detention tube segment, and flexible probe tube segments connected to opposite ends of the flexible detention tube segment, respectively, and the opening is formed in the flexible probe tube segment.

Claim 16 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14, wherein a part of the flexible tube provided with the opening is bent at an angle in a bend, and the opening is formed in an outer corner of the bend.

Claim 17 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14, wherein the tube position finding means is an ultrasonic probe.

Claim 18 (currently amended) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14, wherein the flexible tube compresses probe tube

segments, wherein the probe tube segments are formed of a transparent material, and the tube position finding means is an endoscope.

Claim 19 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14, wherein distal end parts of the flexible tube assume a hooked shape in a free state.

Claim 20 (original) The nasolacrimal stent device for lacrimal passage plastic surgery according to claim 14 further comprising a bougie formed from a wire and capable of being inserted in and extracted from the flexible tube through the opening.